
A crack Italian police squad has been drafted into the battle against fraudulent olive oil producers. Olive oil is the latest food scare to hit Italy, after wine and mozzarella. The BBC's Mark Duff reports from Milan:

Twenty officers from the **specialist food piracy branch** of the paramilitary Carabinieri have just **graduated** as olive oil tasters. They've been trained **to distinguish** between top class extra virgin olive oil - that's unrefined, cold-pressed and expensive - and cheaper, **adulterated** stuff that's been diluted with poorer quality olive oil or other vegetable oils. They'll also be able **to pick up subtle differences** between oil produced in different regions of Italy and abroad.

The **deployment** of the unit comes months after Italian police uncovered the biggest olive oil **fraud** in a decade. Seven processing plants were seized - along with 25,000 litres of **adulterated** oil - and 39 people were arrested in an operation **stretching** from Bari and Naples in the south to Milan in the north. The suspects were accused of mixing olive oil with sunflower and soybean oils, then **selling it on** as **top grade** extra virgin oil.

Italy is the world's second biggest producer of olive oil after Spain - although production was down 15 per cent last year.

Mark Duff, BBC News, Milan

Vocabulary and definitions

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| specialist food piracy branch | a unit that deals only with cases where someone illegally pretends to be selling high quality food which in truth is of poor quality |
| graduated | formally trained |
| to distinguish | here, to taste the difference |
| adulterated | made less pure (by adding low quality or unsuitable substances to it) |
| to pick up subtle differences | to notice/taste the differences that are not obvious/easily noticeable |
| deployment | positioning and making ready for action |
| fraud | when someone obtains money by deceiving people |
| stretching | covering the area; that took place in many towns and areas |
| selling it on | selling it to another person, firm or organisation |
| top grade | of excellent quality |

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7360434.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

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